

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-18 remain in this application. Claims 8-18 have been withdrawn as a result of an earlier restriction requirement. In view of the examiner's earlier restriction requirement, applicant retains the right to present claims 8-18 in a divisional application.

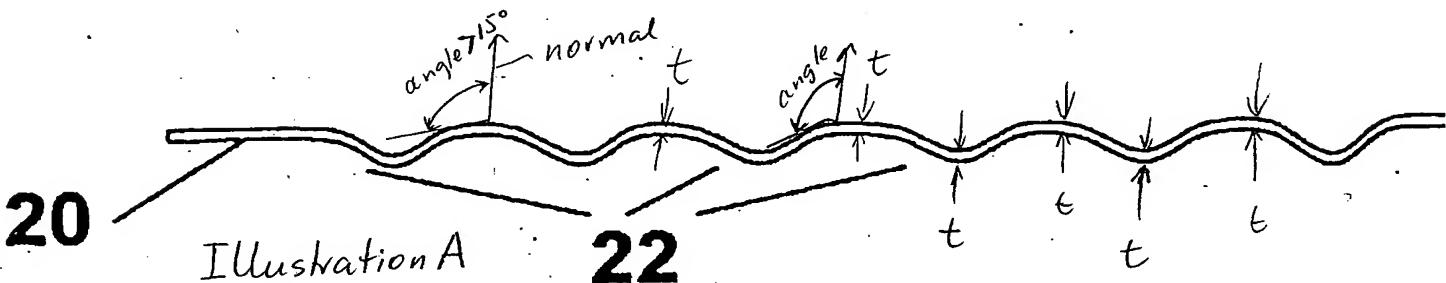
Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Helfinstine et al., EP 1113518 A1.

Applicants respectfully disagree with the grounds for this rejection for the following reasons:

Claim 1 specifies: "An electrolyte sheet comprising a body of varied thickness, said electrolyte sheet having a textured surface with multiple protruding features, said protruding features forming an undercut angle with respect to the normal of said electrolyte sheet, said undercut angle being more than 0 degrees and less than 15 degrees".

The underlined features of claim 1 are not disclosed by the cited reference.

1. The Helfinstine reference does not disclose an electrolyte sheet comprising a body of varied thickness. More specifically, although paragraphs 0008 and 0009 of the reference disclose indentation pattern (see, for example, 1, 3, 4 and 5, which hexagonal, rectangular and other indentation patterns), the described electrolyte sheet has the same surface thickness throughout (see, for example Fig 1a of the Helfinstine reference, and **Illustration A**, below.)



2. The Helfinstine reference does not disclose an electrolyte sheet with "protruding features forming an undercut angle with respect to the normal of said electrolyte sheet, said undercut angle being more than 0 degrees and less than 15 degrees". The electrolyte sheets with such undercut angles θ are shown, for example, in Figs 9A-9C of the Applicants' specification.

Although the cited reference discloses an electrolyte sheet with protruding (or dimpled) feature, there is no disclosure of them forming "an undercut angle with respect to the normal of said electrolyte sheet, said undercut angle being more than 0 degrees and less than 15 degrees." Paragraphs [0008-0009] cited by the Examiner do not disclose features with such angles.

Figures 2 and 2a of the Helfinstine reference illustrate a metal form that is utilised to produce the electrolyte sheet shown in Figs 1 and 1a. The cross-hatched areas correspond to the metal frame and the white areas to the "holes". Paragraphs [0030] and [0031] of the reference refer to Figs 2 and 2a and describe that the green ceramic sheet is placed on the form and the vacuum is applied to the green sheet through these holes, thus resulting in a corrugated pattern (indentations), with the corrugation shape (see Fig1) corresponding to the shape of the metal form (Fig. 2). The resultant electrolyte sheet is corrugated with smooth variations (see Fig 1a, for example), and has no "undercut angles". Paragraph [0009] of the reference (Summary of the Invention) expressly states that indentations or protrusions "do not introduce sharp sheet curvature". Finally, as shown in the Illustration A, above, the angles formed by the "protrusions" with respect to the normal is much larger than 15 degrees.

Claims 2-7 depend from the independent claim 1, as their base claim and, therefore, expressly incorporate the language of claim 1.

Thus, claims 1-7 are not anticipated by Helfinstine et al, EP 1113518 A1.

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Conclusion

Based upon the above amendments, remarks, and papers of records, applicant believes the pending claims of the above-captioned application are in allowable form and patentable over the prior art of record. Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Applicant believes that no extension of time is necessary to make this Reply timely. Should applicant be in error, applicant respectfully requests that the Office grant such time extension pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) as necessary to make this Reply timely, and hereby authorizes the Office to charge any necessary fee or surcharge with respect to said time extension to the deposit account of the undersigned firm of attorneys, Deposit Account 03-3325.

Please direct any questions or comments to Svetlana Z. Short at 607-974-0412.

Respectfully submitted,

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